

# The Eastern Iowa DXer

The Official Newsletter of the  
Eastern Iowa DX Association



An affiliated club of the American Radio Relay League



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July/August 2003

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## Club Officers

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Rick Heinrich, N0YY

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Jeff Davis, N0DY

Secretary Treasurer:

George Carsner, W0PPF

PacketCluster

WB8ZRL

147.51, 144.91, 223.40, CRNETROM

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Joe Finkstein W0MJN

Repeater:

144.59/145.19

N0DX/R

Membership Committee:

Jim Spencer W0SR  
Tom Vavra WB8ZRL

***Just a quick reminder that the  
EIDXA Summer Picnic is scheduled  
for July 26 at the NR0X QTH. Look  
for details on the last page of this  
newsletter!***

The summer picnic is upon us and personally I look forward to another wonderful turn out and another opportunity to talk to everyone in attendance. The picnic will be at the NR0X QTH and more details will follow in this newsletter.

## From the President

By Rick N0YY

First an apology – I promised Jeff to help him get the newsletter out since he is on a special assignment and it is my fault that it is so late. I hope that there have been enough e-mail and word of mouth notices regarding the picnic on July 26<sup>th</sup> that everyone has heard about it before this newsletter.

Another Dayton has come and gone and hopefully most of you have either started or completed the summer antenna work getting ready for the next DX/Contest season. We were well represented again this year and it appeared that only meager money changed hands.

Your leadership has been spending significant time away from the local area. Jeff is on a temporary duty assignment (we hope). I continue to make my periodic visits to Europe and when in the US I travel to Washington DC almost weekly now! One of these days I hope to operate from one of the stations in Europe if I can arrange an appropriate visit schedule. Every time I have tried in the past I either wind up arriving in the middle of a contest, or I start my arrangements too late because of flexible business schedules.

I think you will enjoy the upcoming presentation plans for the fall and winter meetings. I listened to you and will try to make sure we provide some more hands on information mixed with the appropriate operating event videos.



I have to admit that seeing the WRTC 2002 video at our spring meeting stimulated me to do a few more upgrades to my station in preparation for the next season. Now if I just stay home for a while...

After the picnic we can all look forward to the Cedar Valley Hamfest on August 10<sup>th</sup>. This again presents an opportunity to stimulate the economy while visiting with friends.

Have a great summer and I look forward to seeing everyone at the picnic.

### ***WØDXCC 2003 Convention Set for October 18th in Bloomington, Minnesota***

(From a recent press release)

The doors of the Bloomington, Minnesota, Holiday Inn on Highway 35W and 94<sup>th</sup> Street will open to Amateur radio operators with DX in mind on October 18<sup>th</sup> at 8 AM. Well-known WØ-DX speakers will be featured! CQ Hall of Fame Inductee and "Mr. WØDXCC 2002" Glenn Johnson WØGJ will speak on his experiences with four-square antennas and will offer us the latest news from Bhutan, and Ralph Fedor KØIR will present a seminar on his DXpeditions to various rare and very rare Antarctic DX Entities. Radio City, Mounds View, will present a fascinating demo comparing today's top radios and Timewave Technology will demonstrate the art of digital signal processing technology. Other outstanding speakers already booked for the Convention include K9LA, Carl Leutzelschwab with an intriguing talk on the challenges of WØ-land propagation and WØIZ, Igor Zdorov with a presentation on his DXpedition exploits to

rare African and Asian DX Entities. "We are adding more great speakers and will be releasing the information shortly", Chair Lou Sica ACØX reports. The Convention will conclude with a 7PM Banquet at the Holiday Inn with a Keynote Speaker.

### ***Member Profile – Rick, NØYY***

I have enjoyed 36 years in the best hobby in the world even trying to make it a career. I have met hams from around the world in QSO and face to face. It has been a wonderful journey that I have no intention of seeing end soon. But maybe some background would help.

I guess my fascination with radio began at an early age. I was born and lived in Detroit, Michigan. When I was 8 years old I received a crystal set for Christmas and quickly built it and couldn't wait to hook the antenna terminal to something. It wound up being the chain link fence around our house and I marveled at hearing radio stations without anything more than the Cat's Whisker.

I progressed, through Cub Scouts and built a "high performance crystal set" using an oatmeal box and a real diode detector. Again the trusty fence worked wonders to hear "the world". Technology progressed and I built a one transistor radio using the ubiquitous CK722. But all this was just in preparation for real shortwave listening.

My neighbor and I had old cabinet shortwave radios. We would compete to see who could hear the farthest stations. We both devised different antennas to see what we could hear. And then one night as I was tuning above the broadcast band, I heard a local 160 meter ham net. I listened with awe as the mobiles and the fixed stations all talked for a couple



hours. One of the stations started talking about an antenna project he had in mind. He was giving one of the mobiles directions to his house. His directions indicated that he was about a half mile from my house.

So early the next day I got on my bicycle and followed the directions I had copied the night before. I arrived and saw a towering beam glistening in the sky and a driveway filled with cars with large antennas. I never got the courage to knock on his door that day, but after numerous rides past that magnificent house I finally got up the courage to knock on his door. His name was Jim, WA8SIQ and he welcomed me into the world of ham radio with open arms.

Jim was retired and spent weeks helping me learn the code and explaining the theory. I was so confident that I bought a Hallicrafters S20R and a Globe Chief as my novice station. I quickly learned that I needed help because the receiver had a burned out BFO coil and I had to copy W1AW by listening to thumps and beeps. But I did learn. I had a collection of handbooks by this time and I studied as hard as a 15 year old could. In August 1967 I was licensed as WN8ZDR and the glorious trek began.

I sold my trusty 10-speed bicycle, my Hallicrafters S-20R, and used the money (with a supplement from dad) to buy a used Heath Mohawk receiver. I shined it up and found that I could copy code much easier with a BFO. I also loved 40 meter CW. The Globe Chief was rockbound, but I was able to work all I wanted on 40 meters. I got on the air every evening and again in the mornings, flipping the trusty knife switch between receive and transmit.

I joined the Southeastern Michigan Amateur Radio Association (SEMARA)

and quickly was taken under the wing of many of the "old-timers". Joe, W8HID was especially helpful and I went to many hamfests with Joe and his wife Lorna. Joe introduced me to the Findlay, Ohio hamfest and it was there that I put together my first "real" ham station. I found a Johnson Ranger at the hamfest and together with my Mohawk I was happy. Joe helped me build a special T/R switch box that was like VOX and all I had to do was touch the key to go from receive to transmit. I was in heaven.



It was then that I was exposed to contesting. I guess I had my first real exposure to sitting down and honing my CW in a contest while operating with John WA8WCZ (now KBJM) and Mike WA8VMS in the 1967 ARRL Sweepstakes. We spent years operating Sweepstakes together and always working to top the previous year's score. John and I always wanted to improve the antenna system just before the contest so there are many stories of standing in the cold November rain putting the finishing touches on an antenna just minutes before the contest started. But it was all great fun.

In school I met Chris, WA8YWC who helped expose me to DX. He showed me



the DX he had worked in the novice bands and I fell into the lure of DX. I can remember listening to OLU, a military CW station just below 15 meters as a guide to let me know when it was open to Europe. I wound up working 75 countries as a novice using a dipole and vertical antenna.

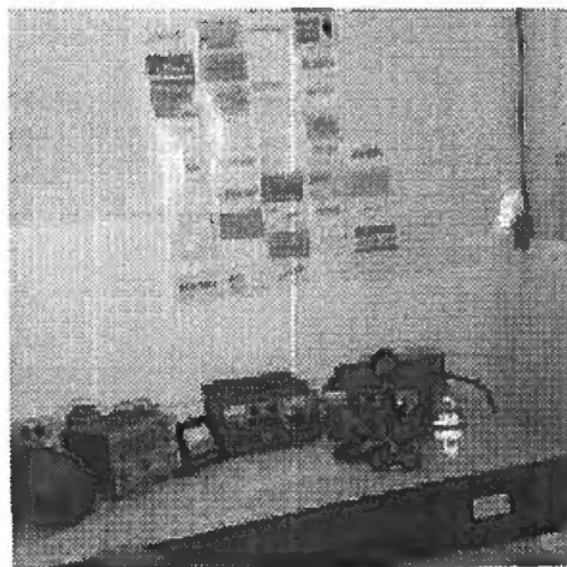
But Chris also pressed me to get my General License. In 1968 I got my General and then the fun really started. I still remembered how this all started and I was fascinated with 160M. I had the Ranger and Mohawk and I wanted to participate with the friends that helped me get started. Joe was a CW operator and loved to spend his time on 160M CW. He was always chasing that elusive G or DL on 160. He had a 75 foot top loaded vertical at the time and I was in awe of the antenna. But my entry was much smaller, using the center conductor of my coax and half of my 80M dipole. I had quite a few burn marks on my lip as I got "bit" by RF from the D-104 microphone.

My father was always ready to climb a tree or to see what mechanical contraption we could put together. We put up a mast with a TA33JR and I launched myself into DX for real. For contests I would borrow an HW-22 and HW-32 so that I could work 40M and 20M SSB along with my Mohawk and Ranger. And then one year someone brought their LA-400C amplifier and we had 400W – WOW!! IT was short lived as I had so much TVI that I had to shut it off after our first foray on 10M AM. Oh well...

Contesting continued as I became a fixture at K8BYI where I participated in all of their operating events. Field Day and the various 160M contests found me in the field or operating the club station at the home of W8KAZ.

I was very active during my high school years. I transitioned from the Mohawk and Ranger to a brand new HW-100. I built it and Mike, WA8VMS finally got it to work. At the same time I took down the mast and put up a short tower (35') and a two element quad. The world was my oyster! With the HW-100 barefoot I worked everything. This was the days of Gus Browning, Danny Weil, Don Miller, and others traveling the world. I learned the importance of being first. One afternoon I had the HW-100 on its side neutralizing the new finals when I heard someone tuning up. The signal stopped and I called and identified myself. I fell out of my chair as K3JJG/YBØ called me and gave me a 59 and then took the frequency and had a pile-up a mile deep!

It was then that I spent all my hard earned money and bought my first Drake twins. I had an R4A and T4XA. There was no stopping me with my twins and the quad. I also upgraded to Advanced in 1969.



I graduated from high school with 275 worked and 88 confirmed. I always found it difficult to initiate a QSL, a habit I still have today!





Things were much slower during my college years. I did operate WA8CQR at Michigan Tech and worked to get the old club call back. After three years we finally got W8YY back. (Hmmm... do you see any patterns here yet?)

I was president of the Michigan Tech Ham Radio Club for two years. I was responsible for updating their antennas on to of Wadsworth Hall. The antennas worked well, but the station equipment left something to be desired. I sold my Drake Twins to the Ham Club at Michigan Tech. The first year I operated the 160M contest from the Upper Peninsula and wound up with the high score in Michigan. A tribute to all the years I operated at K8BYI and other stations.

In 1973 I left college for a while and tried to get back into ham radio from an apartment. I bought a National NC-300 and a Ranger II, but never made it like I wanted. I bought my second Drake Twins – an R4B and T4XB this time and with just a vertical I continued to enjoy the DX part of the hobby with a very limited operating schedule.

I went back to college in 1975. My equipment stayed home until my parents retired and moved. I wound up selling the second set of Drake twins too. In 1976 I wanted to get on the air during the bi-centennial in the worst way. I moved up in technology when I bought a set of Yaesu twins – the FR-101D and FL-101. Wow! Digital readout, general coverage receiver everything. But alas I had to store the equipment more than use it during several moves. My senior year of college found me in a small cabin with a trap vertical still working CW DX every Saturday morning. That ended with graduation in May of 1978.

And that is where the story moves to Iowa. I would up getting a dream job

working for Rockwell Collins in Cedar Rapids in HF antenna coupler design. I was surrounded with amateurs and the best engineers in the world. I was working with John, WØVU in the antenna coupler group and he introduced me to the EIDX and much of the rest is history. I remember my first contest in the fall of 1978 operating from Dewey Treanor's station KØSVX with some of the Who's Who of Eastern Iowa contesting – KØSVX, WØWP, WØSML, KØAT, KØLUZ, what an introduction. And then to other stations for other contests - N4RR and KØJSY. I then changed my call to ADØF.

But then a return to college took some of the wind out of my sails. I got married and returned to Cedar Rapids in May 1980. Over that summer I put up a 71 foot crank-up tower and a TH6DXX. I was ready to take on the world. I finally had a VHF antenna up high enough that I could actually talk to Waterloo for the VHF spotting net. That October I was elected Secretary Treasurer of EIDX a position I would not hold for long.

In March of 1981 I left for Rochester, New York where my ham interests were reduced to operating Field Day for the next several years. While in Rochester, NY I again changed my call. This time I was licensed as NB2N. Our family started and again ham radio would take a back seat.

In 1989 I left Rochester and moved to Annapolis, Maryland and worked for ARINC for 5.5 years until I returned to Cedar Rapids. While in Maryland I bought a TS-850S/AT as the then proclaimed contesters' radio. Well even W3LPL had them in each of his positions. What other testimonial could you ask for?? While in Maryland I got to know W3LPL and K3ZO through the summer PVRC picnics. Wow – what an eye



opener to see the towers and rotating 80 meter beams. Always setting the standards higher and higher!

By now I had a family and interest but no resources to get back into a hobby I craved to embrace. I rejoined EIDX at the winter meeting in 1995 and have been involved ever since. It took a while to collect parts for my station again but I was able to re-kindle my contesting spirit with stints at Tom WØWP's and Toni NØNI's stations. It was a blast.

But when I built my home in rural Marion I thought I had done my homework. I didn't see any hams (at least contesters) when I plotted the locals in a map. I built a house and continued collecting the necessary money. While I was in the process I stated to talk to Jeff NØDY. He had questions about towers and other things. It was then that I learned that he was close enough to know when he was on his tower. So as I continued to design (or over design as I've been told) my station, I was fortunate enough to try all my ideas at Jeff's station first. Again the camaraderie was great. We've done a few contests from his station and I have to admit that Jeff introduced me to the advantages of beverages. Wow – actually being able to HEAR DX on 160 and 80M as opposed to telepathic CW!

That about brings us to date. I'm finally on the air (But not with the full capabilities yet) and have enjoyed chasing new countries and getting the station put together. Yes, lightning has slowed me a bit, but I am hopefully nearing completion of my SO2R station with a pair of FT-1000MPs. It's still a great hobby and one that I hope to enjoy for many years to come.

(OK – Who's next???)

## SALE CORNER

Get a jump on the upcoming Cedar Valley Hamfest. Here are a few things for sale from the shack of NØYY:

Kenwood TS-850S/AT

Includes: SP-31 Speaker

IF-232 Computer Interface

500 Hz CW Filter

250 Hz CW Filter

Astron RS-50M Power Supply

**\$1100**

Hustler 5BTV Vertical (I have two and one conversion kit to make it a 6BTV)

**\$75 ea**

Hy-Gain TH6-DXX (Rebuilt with the stainless hardware upgrade kit)

**\$125**

Swan Two Element Tribander (Perfect for Field Day)

**\$25**

Rohn HDBX-56 Tower with new base mounting stubs and all hardware including an 8 foot mast (Almost new, been on the ground for 5 years.)

**\$250**

PA/Antenna Coupler Parts

Including 4CX1500B with sockets

Vacuum Variable Capacitors

***Make me an offer I can't refuse!***

Builders Dream – I have 9 plastic storage boxes full of new ICs (CMOS, TTL, Analog, etc), Transistors (Switching/RF), hardware, connectors, everything you need to build the necessary accessories for the shack or other homebrew projects. I just don't build anymore! The parts are new, not pulls. There is probably \$300 worth of Digi-Key, Jameco, etc. parts orders in those boxes.

**\$100**



## Summer Picnic

*This year's picnic will be at the QTH of NRØX. Terry has informed me that we will be having Johnsonville Brats with all the trimmings again this year. The chef is not opposed to grilling a special order if someone brings a steak or hamburger etc. Lemonade will also be furnished but if you prefer another beverage you'd better bring it with you.*

*Don't forget to bring a chair, table service and a covered dish. Starting time is anytime after 3:30pm for socializing and serving will begin "about" 5:30pm.*

*In case you haven't been there before, the NRØX QTH is on Highway 1. From the south it is 1.5 miles north of Martelle and from the north it is 1.5 miles south of the intersection with highway 151.*

## Meeting Notice

The next meeting of the Eastern Iowa DX Association will be on Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> at the QTH of NRØX. Monitor 145.19 for directions if needed. See you there



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